

SOCIAL MEDIA CRISIS

HERE ARE 8 THINGS YOU SHOULD DO TO HELP PREVENT, AND IF THE WORST HAPPENS, MANAGE, A **SOCIAL MEDIA CRISIS**.

1. HAVE A PLAN

Every organisation should have a social media policy in place that clearly states how social media should be used and managed. The policy should include the steps to take and a list of people within the company that must be notified if a crisis does arise, a link to your Terms of Service.



2. STOP, LOOK & LISTEN

The most important thing you need to do if a crisis occurs is to pay attention and listen to the conversation. Use social media to monitor the conversation that is directly linked to your brand (direct messages or posts that tag your companies account) and indirect messages using search terms or hashtags to gauge the severity of the situation.



3. KNOW WHAT A CRISIS IS

Know the signs of a potentially viral issue to allow you to respond in a professional, appropriate and compassionate manner. Find out how it originated, who it affects, and why others are joining in. Listen to the conversation and learn from it.



4. ACT FAST

In today's real-time world a quick and accurate response is key. Acknowledge the issue at hand. This will bide you time and allow you to prepare a complete answer or statement later. Being as transparent as possible in a timely manner is highly recommended.



5. LET PEOPLE VENT

Remember, the issue may seem like a storm in a teacup but it is important to ride it out. When acknowledging a crisis, do so on a platform that you have control over e.g. your Facebook or Twitter accounts. This process allows your organisation to control the conversation.



6. ALWAYS KEEP YOUR COOL

Never get into an argument on social media. It is best to take a step back and put yourself in the customer's position, be fair, considerate and careful in your approach. Be cautious not to share personal or confidential commercial information in the public domain.



7. TURN A NEGATIVE INTO A POSITIVE

Take responsibility for your actions and learn from mistakes. Deleting negative comments instead of addressing them will only add fuel to the social-fire and won't show you or your company in a good light. Equally, engaging in negative conversation can also be disastrous – aim to be conciliatory, honest and helpful.



8. BUILD AN AREA TO HOUSE INFORMATION

If appropriate or necessary, develop a page on your website containing information about the crisis and what your company is doing to resolve the issue. Then when responding to followers on social media you can direct them to the dedicated URL to help streamline communication. Also, it is a good idea to keep a paper trail and document the situation so you can refer back to it.

